

Cardiff to Anglesey flights secured for another four years

The new Public Services Obligation (PSO) air service contract has been given to Eastern Airways, who since March 2017, has established stability and restored passenger confidence achieving significant growth on the route of around 40%, bringing visibility to the service amongst new and existing passengers.

Transport Minister, Ken Skates said:

“Wales needs to be better connected. Eastern Airways shares our ambitions to significantly grow the route over the next four years, thereby increasing the economic benefit to Wales. I hope this will include Eastern Airways operating its Jetstream 41 at the full capacity of 29 seats, offering almost 50% more seats than it is currently able to offer.

This increase would be subject to the UK Government supporting the reclassification of Anglesey Airport. This would enable the full capacity utilisation of the larger aircraft helping bring exciting growth opportunities to the region.

The need for an increase in capacity on the route has been clearly demonstrated over the last two years. With increased efficiencies and higher yield due to additional passenger revenue, this increase in capacity would see a reduction in the subsidy over the four years of the contract when compared to continuing with a 19 seat operation.

The new contract will continue to make a positive contribution towards the Welsh economy and the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by lessening the gap between local communities and the capital city, improving regional connectivity, increasing socio-economic opportunities and contributing to the delivery of ‘A Wales of cohesive communities’.

The PSO route provides an important functional and symbolic link connecting north and south Wales. It facilitates access to internal markets for Welsh businesses. This quick and effective internal mode of transport will be vital post Brexit.

In addition to already supporting the Cardiff – Anglesey service, I continue to push the UK Government to allow Wales to introduce a network of new PSO air services across the UK to support Wales’ domestic trade.”

Eastern Airways General Manager (Commercial and Operations), Roger Hage said:

“Since stepping in to cover this incredibly important economic link between the north and south of Wales, we have proactively grown passenger numbers as part of the Flybe branded service.

We are delighted in being awarded the contract to help further grow the capacity on the service in fully supporting the Transport Minister, and both Cardiff Airport and Anglesey Council’s ambition to increase accessibility and also improve connectivity to other services of offered by our partner Flybe, plus Qatar, KLM, Ryanair and TUI at Cardiff.”

[Deputy Minister urges Welsh public to have their say on plastic waste](#)

The Welsh Government has been working with the other UK nations on a comprehensive UK wide approach to address the problems created by commonly littered single use plastics.

As a result, the UK nations have today launched three joint consultations and the Deputy Minister is encouraging those in Wales with an interest to have their say.

Two joint consultations are being launched by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) The first, which applies to the UK as a whole, relates to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging.

Currently, in the UK, it is estimated that producers only pay approximately 10% of the overall cost of recycling their packaging waste. EPR schemes aim to ensure that producers bear the waste management cost of the products they place onto the market, in line with the ‘polluter pays’ principle.

The second consultation, which applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland, relates to a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks containers. The Scottish Government consulted on proposals for a DRS last year.

A third UK-wide consultation is also being published by HM Treasury today. It proposes a tax on the production and import of plastic packaging that does not contain at least 30% recycled plastic.

Hannah Blythyn said: “Plastic waste and packaging waste are important issues. Every year in the UK, we generate around 11 million tonnes of packaging waste as a whole 2.3 million tonnes of which is plastic packaging waste.

“Wales is a world leader in recycling but we want to go further, we want to take action to minimise the amount of packaging we use, and incentivise

better design of products and packaging, so that it can be reused or easily recycled. This could stimulate economic opportunities for Wales and support our aim to become a more circular economy.

“While the consultations are being launched jointly across the whole of the UK, our position as a world leader in recycling means our circumstances are different from the rest of the UK. I am particularly keen to explore whether a DRS for drinks containers would work for Wales, given our already high recycling rate.

“I would like to hear views from all sectors on these proposals as I want to understand the likely impact on local authority income and recycling rates, and also on businesses. I would also like to hear from members of the public. If a DRS is to be introduced in Wales, shoppers will be expected to pay a deposit on drinks containers and have to manually return empty containers to collection points in order to claim back their deposit, rather than use household waste collections provided by their councils.

“I would therefore urge people in Wales to read and respond to the consultations to make sure Wales’ voice is heard on these issues.”

‘A missed opportunity to provide much-needed clarity’ – Finance Ministers express concerns following meeting between the UK government and the devolved administrations

Following a meeting of the devolved administrations with the Chief Secretary of the Treasury, Liz Truss, in Cardiff today, Welsh Finance Minister Rebecca Evans said:

“I was hoping for much greater clarity on what are becoming very important and pressing issues the closer we get to EU exit day, but disappointingly I am leaving the meeting no more reassured.

“There seems to be a real lack of clarity across the UK Government on what is happening with Brexit but with the very real prospect of a no-deal, this is a huge concern to Welsh Government.

“Along with my Scottish counterpart I pressed the Chief Secretary for clarity on a number of financial issues relating to the impact of Brexit, including the possibility of an emergency budget. The

message was clear, a full fiscal event is not on the agenda, adding to the uncertainties we are facing as we prepare to exit.

“The Welsh Government will continue to make the case for Wales to ensure that the interests of Wales are very much at the forefront of discussions.”

Finance Secretary Derek Mackay said:

“I raised a number of issues with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, including urging her to rule out a no-deal Brexit, giving me a cast iron guarantee that all lost EU funding would be replaced in full and meeting all costs associated with the UK government’s changes to public sector pensions. She could do none of these.

“With just weeks to go until the planned EU exit day, the Scottish Government remains deeply concerned about the lack of detail regarding replacement arrangements for EU funding streams, not to mention the severe impact a no-deal could have on our economy and labour market.

“As a responsible government, we will continue to intensify our work to prepare for all Brexit outcomes as best we can and press the UK government to rule out no-deal Brexit and extend the Article 50 process.”

[Welsh Government confirms funding for National Broadcast Archive for Wales](#)

A ground-breaking £9million project to create a National Broadcast Archive for Wales, is a significant step closer, following confirmation of Welsh Government support of £1 million.

Amendments to the project, which have been the subject of the recent discussions between the National Library, BBC Cymru Wales and Welsh Government, were today agreed by the Board of Trustees.

Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

“The Welsh Government has consistently expressed support for the ambition of the National Library to establish a National Broadcast Archive. I appreciate the efforts which have been made over the last few weeks to resolve the outstanding issues and concerns,

and am delighted that the project can now move forward.”

The President of the National Library of Wales, Rhodri Glyn Thomas added:

“We are delighted that the Deputy Minister has lent his support to this pioneering project which now means that we can submit our final bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. As the home of extensive sound and moving images collections, and with material from ITV Wales already at the Library, we intend to safeguard this vital source of our nation’s heritage for present and future generations. We are very grateful for the National Lottery’s support to develop our plans and to BBC Cymru Wales for generously gifting the archive to the Library.”

Rhodri Talfan Davies, Director of BBC Wales said:

“BBC Wales’s archive is a rich tapestry of the nation’s history and I’m delighted to see the next phase of this exciting and innovative project in motion. Working with our partners, the National Broadcast Archive is set to ensure that treasures of the past will be accessible to everyone for generations to come.”

The National Library of Wales and BBC Cymru Wales intend to develop an ambitious plan to provide public access to the BBC Cymru Wales archive at four digital heritage hubs, to be located at Aberystwyth, Wrexham, Carmarthen and Cardiff. In addition, 1500 digital clips, including entire programmes, will be available online for community use.

The archive, which has about 180,000 recordings dating back to the late 1930’s, is an unique and invaluable chronicle of the life of the nation from the Second World War, Aberfan, the miners’ strike, political battles over devolution, sporting triumphs, films and news items capturing the key moments, people and places in Welsh history.

Devolved administrations call for clarity on future funding post-Brexit

Welsh Finance Minister Rebecca Evans, said:

“I will be calling for clarity about our budgets, and pushing for ongoing and meaningful dialogue between the UK government and the

devolved administrations about the challenges we are facing.

“With the clock ticking as we approach EU exit day, it is absolutely vital we are at the heart of decision making and are able to prepare for the impact of Brexit.

“Alongside this, I will also be pressing for further clarity and assurances about the cost associated with the UK government’s changes to public sector pensions and how it intends to fund it.

“Only last week, the First Minister and local government leaders wrote to the Chancellor seeking clarification. Worryingly, even as local authorities are finalising their budgets, there is still some uncertainty about funding.”

Finance Secretary Derek Mackay said:

“Today’s meeting is an opportunity for the UK government to provide much needed clarity around future funding as well as details on what support will be made available to help protect Scotland’s economy against the consequences of the UK’s exit from the European Union.

“Funding from the EU supports jobs in Scotland, from major infrastructure projects to sustaining rural communities and delivering research funding for our world-class universities. That is why the Scottish Government is determined to defend its hard-won fiscal responsibility and maintain the benefits that EU funding has provided to many sectors and individuals in Scotland.

“With just weeks to go until the planned EU exit day, we remain deeply concerned about the lack of detail regarding replacement arrangements for EU funding streams given their importance to individuals, businesses and communities across Scotland.

“Today I will be calling on the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to provide reassurance that Scotland should not be financially worse off as a result of EU exit and to guarantee that all lost EU funding will be replaced in full.

“As the Scottish Government Chief Economist’s State of the Economy report set out, Brexit uncertainty is already impacting key economic indicators and a no-deal Brexit would lead to a major dislocation to the Scottish economy.

“The UK government must immediately rule out the possibility of a ‘no-deal’ Brexit and extend the Article 50 process. However, as a responsible government we will also continue – and indeed intensify – our work to prepare for all outcomes as best we can.

“Alongside the Welsh Finance Minister, I will urge the Chief

Secretary to the Treasury to take an even handed approach in meeting all costs associated with the UK government's changes to public sector pensions. We need urgent clarity and agreement around future funding, in order to plan and focus on delivering efficient and effective public services".